

E

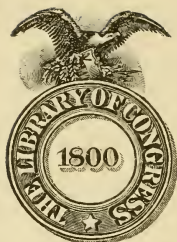
E 467

.1

.H6 S5

Copy 1





Class E467

Book 1
H655

ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN BOSTON

BEFORE

THE HOOKER ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS

BY

MAJ.-GEN. DANIEL EDGAR SICKLES

U. S. ARMY, RETIRED

NOVEMBER 29, 1910

NORWOOD PRESS

NORWOOD, MASS.



GEN. JOSEPH HOOKER

ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN BOSTON

BEFORE

THE HOOKER ASSOCIATION
OF MASSACHUSETTS

BY

MAJ.-GEN. DANIEL EDGAR SICKLES

U. S. ARMY, RETIRED

NOVEMBER 29, 1910

NORWOOD PRESS

NORWOOD, MASS.

E137

1/1
H655

F1

212794

114





H. S. Army

Major General U. S. Army, Ret'd
Removal Feb. 4th 1911

ADDRESS

Comrades and Gentlemen: — I am glad to be here this evening in the presence of so many members of the Hooker Association of Massachusetts, one of the largest and most influential military organizations in America. Through your courtesy it will be my pleasure to talk to you about General Hooker and his campaigns. He was a hero in three wars, — Seminole, Mexican and the War of the Rebellion, the greatest conflict of modern times.

This is a labor of love for me. At least, I am sure to-night of a sympathetic audience, for you all loved Hooker as I did, and you all appreciated and admired him. How fortunate Hooker has been in the devoted friends he has left behind him to cherish his memory ! You and I have been often pained to hear his critics — and they are not few — pass over all his brilliant exploits in many battles and dwell upon the unsatisfactory result of one. They ignore his faithful and victorious service in three wars, and recall only the one battle in which he was not fortunate.

Our loyalty to the memory of Hooker is a sentiment in which affection and admiration are blended. His comrades loved him because he made them good soldiers, — because he gave them confidence in themselves. They loved him because they knew he

was fond of them, — proud of them, — jealous of their honor and fame. We admired him as the intrepid brigade, division, corps, and army commander, whose white plume was always in the front line of battle. We admired his fearless bearing, his picturesque figure in the saddle, at the head of a column, or on the fighting line, — a type of soldier who shared every peril to which his command was exposed. We admired him for his thorough knowledge of his profession, from the duty of an enlisted man to the responsibilities of a commander.

Hooker and I first met in Washington in July, '61, a few days after the battle of Bull Run. He was seeking employment for his sword. He had resigned from the army after the War with Mexico, and settled in California. He intended to devote himself to the pursuits of peace, but, like many another good soldier, he had not much aptitude for business. On the breaking out of the war of secession he felt it to be his duty, as a loyal graduate of West Point, to offer his services to the Government. He came to Washington for that purpose, about the same time Grant was lingering near McClellan's headquarters in Cincinnati, seeking in vain recognition and employment. I had raised and equipped five regiments for the war; they had been two months in camp on Staten Island, in the Bay of New York; they were ready to take the field, but the Government hesitated to muster them into service. It was said by unscrupulous partisans and a few newspapers that troops raised by Sickles or other Democrats

would march over to Jeff Davis in the first battle in which they were engaged. My commission was not issued. I had fed and clothed five thousand men for two weeks, supplying them with tents, camp and garrison equipage, shoes, and blankets, and muskets for instruction and drill and guard duty.

When Hooker heard this and learned that so large a body of effective troops were within a few hours of Washington, and were held back from the defense of the Capitol by mere political prejudices, he exclaimed :

“The Union can never be restored on these lines ! If I had held your command in reserve at Bull Run, I would have won that battle in ten minutes. I will see the President about this to-morrow.”

President Lincoln sent for me the next day. He said :

“We can’t succeed in this war if only the men of one party take up arms for the Union. I hope to see men of all parties — Democrats and Republicans — in the army and navy. We can’t have too many Democrats in the ranks nor in important commands. If men enlist under Democratic leaders, it is because they enjoy the confidence of those who follow their patriotic example.”

My command was at once mustered into service and ordered to Washington. My commission as Colonel of the First Regiment of “United States Volunteers” was issued. Thus began my acquaint-

ance with Hooker, and then began my career in the War for the Union.

When the Army of the Potomac was organized, Hooker was assigned to the command of the second division of the Third Army Corps under Heintzelman. My brigade was included in Hooker's division. In March, '62, Hooker and his division embarked with the Army of the Potomac on transports for Yorktown, to enter upon the Peninsular campaign under General McClellan. The battle of Williamsburg, on the 5th of May, '62, — a Third Army Corps battle, — was the first proof given to the country of the martial character of the Army of the Potomac. The Third Army Corps, under Heintzelman, Hooker and Kearny, set its standard high in that engagement, and always maintained it to the end. Williamsburg was the bloody baptism of the Third Army Corps. For that reason we chose it as the anniversary of the Third Army Corps reunions. For nearly fifty years we have commemorated every recurrence of the 5th of May. It is the oldest military association of the Union armies, having been organized at Brandy Station September 2, 1863. I may say here that the severest loss of the day at Williamsburg, in any regiment, was suffered by the first regiment of my brigade, — Colonel William Dwight of Massachusetts commanding, — one of the five regiments raised by me and of which I was the first Colonel. It was called "Sickles' Own." This regiment went into its first battle with thirty-three officers and seven hundred men. It fought, for four hours, more than three

times its numbers, losing twenty-two officers, including the Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel, and an aggregate loss of three hundred and thirty.

Hooker had no patience with that class of commanders who never move without "orders," — too often a convenient excuse for doing nothing. He never looked with indifference upon troops hard pressed by the enemy. His chivalrous nature at once sent him forward with help. He was stung to the quick when he found masses of men held back by their chiefs, while he was contending against superior forces. In his report of the battle of Williamsburg he exclaimed, — and I can recall his emotion when he read these words to me, —

"History will not be believed when it relates that the noble officers and men of my division were permitted to carry on their unequal struggle that day in the presence of more than thirty thousand of their comrades, with arms in their hands, who had not fired a shot. Nevertheless, it is true. If we failed to destroy the rebel army on the plateau of Williamsburg, it surely will not be ascribed to the want of courage or steadfastness in my command."

In the subsequent battles of the Peninsular campaign, — Fair Oaks, Oak Ridge, Glendale, Malvern Hill and others, — Hooker and his division won their full share of honors. After the disasters of Pope's campaign, when McClellan was restored to the command of the Army of the Potomac, Hooker was assigned to the command of the First Army Corps.

McClellan, a great soldier, tells the story of Hooker at Antietam. No one knew it so well. * McClellan wrote to Hooker three days after the battle :

“Had you not been wounded when you were, I believe the result of the battle would have been the entire destruction of the rebel army, for *I know* that, with you at its head, your Corps would have kept on until it gained the main road. As a slight expression of what I think you merit, I have requested that the Brigadier General’s commission in the regular army, vacant by Mansfield’s death, may be given to you.”

Hooker was at once made a Brigadier General in the regular army to date from the day this letter was written, thus crowning the ambition of the brilliant young adjutant of the battalion of cadets at West Point.¹

When Hooker was assigned to the command of the Army of the Potomac in January, ’63, that army had fallen to an extreme depth of demoralization. Three thousand officers and more than eighty thousand

¹ Since the delivery of this speech, on November 29, 1910, my attention has been called to a review of Major Bigelow’s “Commentary on the Chancellorsville Campaign,” which appeared in the *New York Sun* of November 6, signed “J. M. W.” The reviewer charges Hooker with skulking from the battle of Antietam, on the pretense that he was disabled by a wound. The absurdity of this preposterous accusation is shown by the letter of General McClellan, which is quoted above, in the text. Perhaps the illustrious reviewer, whose name I do not know, may now accuse McClellan of a conspiracy with Hooker to obtain for Hooker the appointment of Brigadier General in the Regular Army, on false pretenses ! Malice can go no further !

men were absent without leave. Desertions numbered at least two hundred a day. The army had failed in several campaigns. Three commanders had been superseded. Recruiting had come to a halt. Reënforcements were not in sight. The Proclamation of Emancipation had put a new phase on the war. It had greatly divided public opinion in the North; it had spread dissensions in the army, discouraging reënlistments among the two-year men whose term of service was about to expire. Hooker soon changed all this. He brought back the absentees; he restored the *morale* of the army, reviving confidence in itself and its leader; he gave his army incessant occupation, — the best remedy for demoralization; and in April, '63, it was as strong and efficient for another campaign as it had been at any period of the war.

Hooker was no politician; he was a patriot; his whole soul was intent on the preservation of the Union. He was ambitious as a soldier, it is true, but his ambition was to be foremost in achieving success for our cause. He was devoted to the support of Lincoln, and praised enthusiastically his Emancipation Proclamation. In this he differed very much from other prominent commanders who had little faith in Lincoln's ability as a ruler, and regarded his Emancipation Proclamation as ill-timed and too radical a measure. They shared McClellan's belief that we should make a compromise with the South, leaving slavery intact.

While Hooker was the idol of the soldiers, he was

not liked by many prominent commanders, such as Scott, Halleck, Grant, Sherman, Meade, Reynolds and others. Sherman went so far as to threaten his resignation if Hooker were appointed to the command of the Army of the Tennessee, made vacant when McPherson was killed. Soon after the battle of "Peach Tree Creek," in which Hooker was distinguished, Sherman met Hooker near his headquarters. In the conversation that followed about the battle, Hooker spoke with much feeling of his serious losses in the engagement.

"I am mourning over the loss of two thousand of my brave men," said Hooker.

Sherman replied, "Oh, most of them will turn up when 'Grub Time' comes around!"

Hooker's face betrayed his anger, but he said nothing.

Grant evidently intended, when Hooker was under his command in the autumn of '63, in Tennessee, that Hooker should be only a spectator of the battle of Missionary Ridge. Grant took the Eleventh Army Corps away from Hooker and left him isolated with a small force in Wauhatchie Valley. But fortune favored Hooker. By the carrying away of a bridge across the Tennessee River, at Brown's Ferry, Hooker retained detachments from three army corps. With these augmented forces he won the battle of Lookout Mountain; and on the following day, quickly repairing the bridge, he crossed Chatanooga Creek with his troops, and successfully assaulted the left flank of Bragg's army, thus sharing

conspicuously in the battles of that great campaign, for which he has never received half the credit due him. "

Bragg, in his official report of the battle of Missionary Ridge, referring to Hooker's assault on his left flank, says :

"About this time I learned that our extreme left had also given way and that my position was almost surrounded.". . . "All to the left, however, except a portion of Bates' division, was entirely routed and in rapid flight, nearly all the artillery having been shamefully abandoned by its infantry support. Every effort which could be made by myself and staff and by many other mounted officers availed but little. A panic such as I had never before witnessed seemed to have seized upon men and officers, and each seemed to be struggling for his personal safety, regardless of his duty or his character. In this distressing and alarming state of affairs, General Bates was ordered to hold his position, covering the road for the retreat of Breckenridge's command, and orders were immediately sent to Generals Hardee and Breckenridge to retire their forces upon the depot at Chickamauga."

Hooker's victory over Longstreet at Wauhatchie was one of the most important engagements, in the southwest, during the war. It opened up communication with Thomas' base of supplies, and saved his army from starvation and surrender.

The hostility of Halleck, Commander-in-Chief of all the Armies, was shown in the Gettysburg campaign, when Hooker asked that the garrison at Harper's Ferry — ten thousand men — should be re-

lieved and sent to him as a reënforcement for the approaching battle. Halleck curtly refused this request, saying that Harper's Ferry must be held and its garrison retained in its full strength. Hooker thereupon asked to be relieved of the command of the Army of the Potomac, intimating that it was apparent he no longer retained the confidence of the Government, which was vital to the success of any commander of an army. The following day, when Meade was assigned to the command, he renewed the same request, and it was at once granted without hesitation, furnishing the most obvious proof of personal hostility to Hooker and of favoritism to Meade, his successor. Hooker then asked that he might be assigned to the command of the Fifth Army Corps in the Army of the Potomac, which had been just vacated by Meade. This chivalrous desire to share the perils and fortunes of the Army was repelled and denied by Halleck. Similar hostility was afterwards shown by Halleck when Hooker asked to be relieved of the command of the Twentieth Corps in Sherman's Army. Hooker requested that he might be assigned to the command of his old division in the Army of the Potomac under Grant, in June, '64, and this too was refused. No better evidence could be given of the hostility shown to this brilliant and faithful soldier, prompted by personal dislike and prejudice.

The most successful commanders in our armies have been those who have had the most confidence in their volunteer forces. From Bennington, in the Revolutionary War, to Appomattox, from Stark

to Grant, this has been the secret of success. The armies of Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Thomas — like the Army of the Potomac — were almost wholly made up of volunteers. Their best work was done by volunteers. These great leaders all learned to confide in their volunteers. Hooker was foremost in the Army of the Potomac for his confidence in volunteers. The troops under his command were nearly all volunteers. He believed them capable of anything that soldiers could do; he exercised great personal influence over them, and for him they would perform miracles. Hooker and Kearny created the Third Army Corps. I was fortunate in being their successor. I inherited from them the command of volunteers, made good soldiers under their supervision. Of the three hundred regiments of the Union army most conspicuous for distinguished conduct and for the largest losses suffered in battle, as enumerated by Colonel W. F. Fox in his Historical Summary, forty-three are taken from the roster of the Third Army Corps. There were twenty-five corps of Infantry in the army, besides the Cavalry and Artillery. It therefore appears that about one sixth of the best fighting battalions in our service were pupils of Third Army Corps commanders.

Besides the admirable compilation of Colonel Fox, let me commend to your perusal the late General St. Clair Mulholland's work, entitled *The American Volunteer*, in which he points out a great number of regiments of volunteers that served in our armies in the War of the Rebellion, that lost in killed and

wounded, in one battle, fifty per cent and more of the number taken into action, — a record without a parallel in any other war in any part of the world. “The armies of England,” he says, “did great deeds during the centuries past; the veterans of Napoleon left the memory of their splendid fighting on many gory fields, — but the volunteers of America, both in individual heroism and in the gallantry shown by them as organizations, surpasses any army that ever marched on earth. Not in the history of the world,” he adds, “is there a record of any regiment or battery losing fifty per cent in killed and wounded in a single battle, until our War of the Rebellion.”

Nor are his researches confined to the Union armies. He cites the splendid record of the Twenty-sixth North Carolina regiment at Gettysburg, where it lost in killed and wounded, on the first day, $71\frac{7}{10}$ per cent of the eight hundred and twenty officers and men it took into action. Thirty-four of its thirty-nine officers were killed or wounded! Nor does Mulholland limit himself to the records of the white regiments in the opposing armies. He cites regiments and brigades of our colored troops that lost fifty per cent and more in killed and wounded in one battle. The *American Volunteer* is a book that should be in every library in America. It should be read and studied in every school and college in every state from which our volunteers were drawn. It is an inspiration to every American.

In his conception of military operations, Hooker was audacious, ingenious, original, acute; in executing

them he was energetic, yet circumspect and prudent. He was severe in discipline, exacting in his demands upon officers and men ; lofty in his ideal of the soldier's intrepidity, fortitude, earnestness and zeal ; yet he was generous in praise ; quick to see and recognize ability and merit as well in the ranks of an adversary as in his own. He never underestimated the Army of Northern Virginia. He often said that the discipline of Lee's army made it incomparably the most efficient force, of its numbers, ever organized. He never ceased to lament that the gentle, tender nature of Lincoln, the martyr, made it impossible to impose upon our armies the rigorous discipline maintained in the rebel forces. The government of Davis, the rebel ruler, was a military despotism, inspired by his military training from boyhood.

Let us now devote a few minutes to the battle of Chancellorsville, about which Hooker's critics are so fond of talking, and of which they too often show gross ignorance. The truth is that the campaign of Chancellorsville is not understood by most of those who criticize Hooker's management of it.

First, let me point out that the disparity of numbers — sixty thousand under Lee, and more than a hundred thousand under Hooker — is more apparent than real. The illustrious Longstreet, Lee's ablest lieutenant, in his comments on the Chancellorsville campaign says :

“Lee had interior lines of defense, while his adversary occupied exterior lines and was divided by two crossings of the Rappahannock, which made Lee's

sixty thousand for defense about equal to one hundred and thirteen thousand under Hooker."

Chancellorsville was a drawn battle, the losses on each side being about equal, except that the rebel loss was greater in prominent officers. The number of battle flags and prisoners taken on either side was nearly the same. I captured seven flags on the 3d of May. No strategic advantage of any importance was gained on either side. The Army of the Potomac still remained competent to win Gettysburg, as it did win it. And had Hooker remained in command of that army, we would have reaped the advantages of the victory at Gettysburg by a prompt and energetic counter attack and pursuit on the third day, which we failed to secure under Meade.

There are several noticeable resemblances between the operations of Napoleon at Wagram and of Hooker at Chancellorsville. Both threw large bodies of troops across a river between sunset and dawn, in the face of vigilant enemies. The passage of the Danube by Napoleon and of the Rappahannock and the Rapidan by Hooker are pointed out at our Military Academy as the most instructive examples of such movements. Both commanders failed to profit by the surprise of their adversaries. The Archduke Charles, as soon as daylight revealed the presence of the French army, fell back to a strong position from which his Austrians repulsed their impetuous and confident assailants. Hooker took up a defensive position in the Wilderness, to await the capture of Fredericksburg by Sedgwick and his junction with

the main army. Wagram and Chancellorsville were drawn battles, leaving both armies effective in *morale*, material and strength. There is, however, this important difference, — the commanding general of the Union army was disabled and made unconscious by a serious injury, from which he never afterwards fully recovered. This misfortune left the Army of the Potomac without a head. During the critical hours of the battle of Chancellorsville, on May 3, 1863, Hooker was tortured by pain, and unable to command. In these precious hours the battle was undecisive.

Chancellorsville was a battle fraught with ill-fortune. Hooker's star failed him, for once. A dozen "ifs" happened, without fault on the part of Hooker, and these "ifs," all going the wrong way, turned the day to one barren of results:

1st: "If" Stoneman, with his ten thousand cavalry, had not failed in his raid on Lee's lines of communication with Richmond, — Lee's base of supplies, — an inexcusable failure never fully explained; Stoneman's movement was ordered by Hooker as an essential preliminary to his campaign. It was expected to force Lee out of Fredericksburg towards Gordonsville or Richmond. Stoneman was ordered by Hooker to send a daily report of Lee's movements but he did not obey that order.

2d: "If" Sedgwick had pushed forward energetically from Fredericksburg and had joined Hooker

at Chancellorsville, as he should have done, Hooker would have moved out of the Wilderness on Lee's lines of communication ;

3d : "If" Howard had guarded his right flank with vigilance, thereby saving his corps from the disaster that followed his neglect ; Howard had distinct and timely notice from Hooker to be prepared for attack ;

4th : "If" I could have been reënforced at the "Furnace" by Hooker, before Jackson struck Howard ; I had three divisions posted in a strong position, between Lee and Jackson ; Lee had divided his army into two wings, about thirty thousand men each (one wing under Jackson and the other under Lee in person), placing them beyond supporting distance of each other, so that both wings could have been attacked simultaneously, — Jackson's wing by my forces, and Lee's wing by the main army under Hooker, — Lee's defeat would have certainly followed.

5th : "If" Hooker had not been "knocked out" and left unconscious while standing on the porch of Chancellor House, his headquarters, thereby leaving his army without a head, in the very crisis of the battle ;

6th : "If" I had been reënforced on Sunday morning, May 3, when I was fighting double my numbers and had held my ground until I had fired my last shot, — a reënforcement that was impossible so far as Hooker was concerned, as he

was unconscious and speechless and could give no order ;

7th : “If” Couch, commanding the Second Corps, or Reynolds of the First Corps, or Meade of the Fifth Corps, had helped me — as they might have done — with two or three brigades out of fifty thousand men under their command who had not yet fired a shot, when Stuart, who succeeded Jackson, was already torn to pieces by the fire of the Third and Twelfth Corps;

8th : “If” Couch, the senior Corps commander, had taken the reins of command in his hands when Hooker was paralyzed, Chancellorsville would have been a Union victory;

9th : And “if” the storm that fell upon us the day after Hooker’s wound, carrying away all but one of our pontoon bridges on the Rappahannock, had not happened, we might have held safely our communications, brought up subsistence and ammunition from the northern side of the river, at Falmouth, continued the campaign after Hooker revived, and won the victory in spite of all our misfortunes.

But, alas ! this was not to be. In the providence of God the day had not yet come for Gettysburg, or Vicksburg, or Lookout Mountain, or Missionary Ridge ; nor for Grant, nor Spotsylvania, nor Appomattox.

The best proof that victory was in our grasp on Sunday morning, the 3d of May, is found in the fact

that after I had fired my last round of infantry ammunition and was obliged to fall back to my second fortified position, my rear guard was not pressed. The enemy, under Stuart, the successor of Jackson, followed my forces in a mob, without formation. Observing this, I directed Captain Seeley of Battery K, Fourth United States Artillery,¹ to take position on the flank of the advancing crowd under Stuart and give them a few parting rounds of grape and canister. At the same time I ordered General Sewell, commanding my rear guard, composed of the Second New Jersey Brigade, to about face and charge Stuart's mob with the bayonet as soon as Seeley had fired a dozen rounds of grape and canister. This bayonet charge was made energetically and gallantly by Sewell and his command, and he captured more prisoners than he had men under him, and seven battle flags besides.

You can thus plainly see what would have been the result if I could have brought up three fresh brigades, — say, seven thousand men, with ample ammunition, and their bayonets in reserve, charging upon Stuart's demoralized and exhausted troops. Victory would have been ours.

Returning from Chancellorsville, Hooker asked me, "What will be said of my campaign?"

I replied: "Military critics — and commanders whom you have criticized — may say that you should not have divided your army in three parts, beyond supporting distance of each other, sending your cavalry corps on a fruitless raid towards Rich-

¹ He died December 30, 1910, at Sawtelle, California.

mond, leaving your main army blindfolded in the Wilderness; it may be said that you should have brought up Sedgwick and his four strong divisions from the north bank of the Rappahannock, as soon as he had served your purpose of deceiving the enemy about your plan of crossing the river, so that your whole army would have been united and ready for battle; it may be said that, instead of sitting down in the Wilderness, where you could see nothing and do nothing, you should have advanced your army to the open ground, on Lee's communications, in a strong position for defense, thereby forcing Lee to take the offensive; it may be said that you should not have established your headquarters under fire, at Chancellor House, as if you were commanding a brigade and not an army of over a hundred thousand men, and that in this, as in the separation of your army in three parts, you forgot the admonition of Lincoln: 'Beware of rashness and over-confidence'; it may be said that on the instant, on May 2, when you learned that Lee had divided his army, you should have attacked Jackson with all of your available forces, drawn from the First, Second, Third and Fifth Army Corps, directing Sedgwick at the same time to assail Lee energetically — as by so doing you would have destroyed Jackson and forced Lee to surrender."

Hooker said, "How easy it is to fight a battle after it has been fought!"

There are other examples of battles decided by accidents or "ifs." For an instance of this, recall what happened at Waterloo.

"If" No. 1: It was the intention of Napoleon to begin the attack early in the day; but a heavy rain storm occurred on the night of June 17, 1815. He found the ground so muddy in the morning as to be impassable for artillery and trains; he was therefore compelled to wait until noon before beginning operations, thereby giving time to Blucher to reach the battlefield. Had the action begun two hours sooner, he would have arrived too late to save Wellington.

"If" No. 2: Another instance is the disaster that happened to the French cuirassiers, when a treacherous guide led them to the sunken road of Ohain, in which thousands perished, causing the failure of the cavalry assault on the infantry squares that held the center of the Allies' line of battle. Here was another *"if"* that turned the tide of battle.

As Victor Hugo says: "If it had not rained on the night between the seventeenth and eighteenth of June, 1815, the future of Europe would have been changed. Providence only required a cloud, crossing the sky at a season when rain was not expected, to overthrow an empire. The battle of Waterloo could not begin until half past eleven, and that delay gave Blucher time to come up."
 . . . "A chain of accidents decided Waterloo." . .

"If" No. 3: "Napoleon's catastrophe was brought about by a peasant's shake of the head. Thus began the loss of the battle." "If the little shepherd that served as guide to Bülow, Blucher's lieutenant, had advised him to debouch from the forest

above Priestemont instead of below Plancanoit, the map of Europe would have been different, for Napoleon would have won the battle of Waterloo. By another road than that below Plancanoit, the Prussian army would have come upon a ravine impassable by artillery, and Bülow would not have arrived on the battlefield."

Other accidents, — other "*ifs*," — might be named that decided Waterloo. "Ifs" often upset the best planned campaigns, and defeat the ablest commanders without fault on their part. "Ifs" baffled Napoleon, at Waterloo, as they baffled Hooker at Chancellorsville.

Chancellorsville and Gettysburg were the beginning and the end of one campaign. Gettysburg was Hooker's revenge for Chancellorsville. The armies of Hooker and Lee were both ready for decisive results. Hooker, in May, chose Virginia as his field of operations, but his injury required a brief period of recuperation. Lee profited by the chance to transfer the battle ground to Pennsylvania; he moved toward the Potomac, threatening the Capital and Baltimore, closely followed by Hooker, but he repeated Hooker's mistake at Chancellorsville and sent off his cavalry, under Stuart, on a useless raid through Maryland and Pennsylvania. Without Stuart, Lee was blindfolded, as Hooker was in the Wilderness. Hooker now profited by the presence of Pleasonton and his superb cavalry corps, masked our advance, put our army on Lee's flank, threatening his communications, before he knew Hooker had crossed the

Potomac, — thus forcing the enemy to accept battle on our own terms. Gettysburg was won by the army reorganized by Hooker. It was won because Meade adopted Hooker's plan of campaign, after Hooker was relieved, just prior to the battle.

Meade's campaign was shaped by Hooker's movements and executed by Butterfield, Hooker's Chief of Staff. The battlefield was determined by the unforeseen collision of drifting columns of the two armies of Lee and Meade. Lee was so confident of success that he waited only for the concentration of his army to attack wherever he might find us. The battle of Gettysburg began on July 1, '63, three days after Hooker asked to be relieved from command, and, as General Newton said, "We were hammered by the enemy into a strong position, and won." If Hooker had remained in command, Lee would not have been permitted to take his army back to Virginia; but the fruits of our victory were not harvested. History will award to Hooker a large share of the honors of the Gettysburg campaign. This verdict, however, was anticipated when Congress gave the thanks of the nation to Major General Joseph Hooker for the "skill, knowledge and endurance which first covered Washington and Baltimore from the meditated blow of the advancing and powerful army of the rebels, led by General Robert E. Lee." It cannot have escaped your notice that there is usually a popular disposition to remember a failure and to forget a success. How seldom one hears of Hooker at Williamsburg, or Fredericksburg, or

Antietam, or Wauhatchie, or Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, or Resaca, or at Peach Tree Creek — one of Hooker's most brilliant battles; but of Chancellorsville people are never silent. The imagination of critics is exhausted to find grounds of reproach; and Hooker's critics, in their desperation, at one time insisted that at Chancellorsville he was drunk. This accusation took form enough, fortunately, to be investigated by the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War. They reported, after a searching inquiry, that there was no foundation whatever for the slander. Lincoln might have said of Hooker, as he said when a similar falsehood was told of Grant in the West, "I wish I knew where he got his whisky, I would send a barrel of it to every army headquarters."

I may add my own testimony to refute this imputation. In the Chancellorsville campaign I was in communication with General Hooker almost every hour in the day. He was always sober, always alert, always vigilant, until prostrated by the cruel injury he received on the balcony of the Chancellor House during the battle of May 3. I served under Hooker in 1861-62, on the Lower Potomac, and all through the Peninsular campaign, and in Burnside's Fredericksburg campaign. I spent a month with him, as his guest, in Sherman's campaign in 1864. I served under him as a Division, Corps, Grand Division, Army, and Department commander in 1861-2-3-5, and I always found him efficient, capable, energetic and sober.

Hooker was often reminded of Hadley, the home of his boyhood, when he looked from the heights of Lookout Mountain. The Tennessee, like the Connecticut River, winds itself around a peninsula in the valley, the counterpart of Hadley. It is called Moccasin Bend. Yet how different the picture on the eventful day of the battle of Lookout Mountain! In Hadley, on the banks of the Connecticut, all was peaceful repose; while around the head of the unmoved warrior on the heights of Lookout, above the clouds, the storm of conflict raged in wildest fury. Hooker and I rode over the battlefields of Wauhatchie, Lookout Mountain, Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge in April, '64. He had been in camp during the winter on the slope of the mountain, overlooking the valley.

Hooker was a master of military narrative. His style was concise, clear, vivid, stirring. His official reports are models of picturesque description. From them history can be transcribed, as he wrote it. They contain many admirable topographical sketches, — in pen and ink, — so well defined that from these reports accurate maps of the scene of operations may be outlined. His eye seemed to take at once a photographic impression of the field, in which valleys and hills, roads and streams, forests and clearings and landmarks were distinctly shown. He was a born topographer.

* Hooker enjoyed a campaign. He was indifferent to hardships, exposure or peril. * We were reclining one afternoon in May, '64, near Calhoun, in Georgia,

at a halting place, after a hot march, and had unsaddled our horses to freshen the animals and because we needed the saddles for pillows. I asked him what he regarded as the highest form of human enjoyment. He answered, "Campaigning in an enemy's country." He was happier in a tent than he could have been in a palace. Hooker had humor and wit. He said "he always caught cold when he slept in a house." He complained at Malvern Hill that when he had a guide he was usually led to the wrong road. He was always afraid of guides. He remembered, perhaps, what happened to Napoleon's cavalry at Waterloo, who were destroyed by the mistake or treachery of a guide. After Ringgold, Grant said that Hooker had lost too many men in his pursuit of the enemy, — striking Bragg when at bay. Hooker replied that he "knew no way of swimming without getting wet." He said to me at Fredericksburg that military commanders might sometimes learn a profitable lesson from Rocky Mountain mules, that is to say, "Be sure of safe footing for three legs before taking a step forward with the fourth."

Soldiers soon take on the traits of their commanders. When you know a captain, you see his company. A regiment is the counterpart of its colonel, — an army of its chief. The maker's name is always on the handle. At Resaca, Hooker was ordered by Thomas to take a strong redoubt covering the enemy's line of retreat. Two or three assaults made by the Western troops had failed. I happened to be Hooker's guest at his headquarters. He said to me: "I

will capture that work to-day at any cost. We are serving here, but we belong to the Army of the Potomac. I owe this much to that army." Tremain,¹ now critically ill, unhappily, — then my senior aide-de-camp, — volunteered his services to lead one of the columns of Butterfield's division of Hooker's corps, which was selected for the assault. As you may suppose, I was an attentive spectator of the proceedings. The enemy was driven from the redoubt, but we could not occupy it nor take away any of the guns, because the work was found to be commanded by thousands of the enemy intrenched on the flanks and rear. Night closed the combat. Not a man on either side could live within the fort; it was deserted. Assailants and defenders slept on their arms, our men on the slope of the hill crowned by the redoubt, the enemy in their rifle pits. About nine o'clock, while we were talking over the incidents of the day, in Hooker's tent, we heard loud cheers. Going out to learn the news, we were met by a detachment hauling the guns of the redoubt to Hooker's headquarters. His men had profited by the night to scrape down with their hands and bayonets the embrasures for the guns, and, thus opening the way, had run the cannon down the hillside and brought their well-won trophies to their chief, of whom his men were the type in determination, tenacity and pluck.

Alas! I must not dwell too long on these tempting themes. You know there is a dangerous fascination in fighting our battles o'er again. Hooker's character

¹ He died on December 10, 1910.

was thoroughly military. He was fit for command. He was proud of the profession of arms. He brought to it the highest accomplishments of a soldier. His manner and bearing were distinguished, yet urbane and gentle. His temper was quick, yet forgiving. He was diligent and punctilious in the discharge of duty. Toward all under his command he was exacting in discipline; inexorable to the laggard; prodigal in praise to the intrepid and diligent. He always bowed to superior authority with the same loyalty that he demanded from his own troops. He never sulked in his tent when summoned to battle. He supported McClellan, Burnside, Thomas, Sherman and Grant with unfaltering fidelity and zeal.

I am here to-night in the presence of those Hooker loved, — his comrades and his friends. He was a patriot. He has passed into history with the great characters of '61 to '65. He was a favorite of Lincoln. He filled glorious pages of our American annals. He was a loyal son of Massachusetts. He was proud of her soldiers, many of whom he led in battle, and among all her soldiers he was the foremost. His name and fame honor this grand old Commonwealth. I am glad Massachusetts has erected a splendid monument to Hooker. He deserved one.

And now, comrades and friends, I must take leave of you; my theme is by no means exhausted. I would gladly prolong my address, were it not for the fear that I might weary you. When we speak of those we love, it is difficult to stop.

I might have recalled Hooker's earlier exploits in the

Seminole War, in Florida ; I might have reminded you of his brilliant services in Mexico, from 1846 to '48 under Scott, in that wonderful campaign from San Juan de Ulloa and Cerro Gordo, to Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey and the Gates of Mexico, in which Scott and Taylor and Wool and Doniphan conquered an empire, with twenty thousand men, — half of them volunteers !

I have told you of Williamsburg, Fair Oaks, Oak Ridge, Glendale and Malvern Hill in the Peninsular campaign, and Antietam, under McClellan, in the great war for the preservation of the Union ; I have recalled Hooker's triumphs on Lookout Mountain and at Missionary Ridge under Grant and Thomas ; I have touched upon Hooker's unappreciated service under Sherman, at Resaca, Kenesaw Mountain, Peach Tree Creek and other battles, in which he won enduring fame. I have shown that in the Chancellorsville campaign he would have been successful if he had been loyally supported by all of his corps commanders and had escaped the cruel injury that paralyzed him.

History will inscribe Hooker's name in her list of great commanders. History will accord to him the justice denied to him by his contemporaries. He is not alone among the great soldiers to whom governments have been unjust and ungrateful. Napoleon had his Waterloo, but France will never forget his great campaigns. Shall America ever forget Hooker's brilliant achievements in three wars, in which he was always a heroic figure? *Never! Never!* It is sad

to believe that Hooker and McClellan, and perhaps Thomas, in their last days, were broken-hearted when they mourned over the ingratitude of the Republic they had so ably and so nobly served. But Hooker had the consolation of knowing that among the troops he led in many battles he was ever uppermost in their hearts. And he knew besides that, above all, in this grand old Commonwealth of Massachusetts his fame will live forever.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 003 384 788 9

